



DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

Proposed Information Collection; Comment Request; Reporting Requirements for Sea Otter Interactions with the Pacific Sardine Fishery; Coastal Pelagic Species Fishery Management Plan

AGENCY: National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Commerce.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: The Department of Commerce, as part of its continuing effort to reduce paperwork and respondent burden, invites the general public and other Federal agencies to take this opportunity to comment on proposed and/or continuing information collections, as required by the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995.

DATES: Written comments must be submitted on or before [INSERT DATE 60 DAYS AFTER DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE *FEDERAL REGISTER*].

ADDRESSES: Direct all written comments to Adrienne Thomas, PRA Officer, NOAA, 151 Patton Avenue, Room 159, Asheville, NC 28801 (or at PRAComments@doc.gov). All comments received are part of the public record. Comments will generally be posted without change. All Personally Identifiable Information (for example, name and address) voluntarily submitted by the commenter may be publicly accessible. Do not submit Confidential Business Information or otherwise sensitive or protected information.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Requests for additional information or copies

of the information collection instrument and instructions should be directed to Joshua Lindsay, (562) 980-4034 or Joshua.Lindsay@noaa.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

I. Abstract

This is a regular submission, an extension of a currently approved collection.

On May 30, 2007, NMFS published a final rule (72 FR 29891) implementing a requirement under the Coastal Pelagic Species (CPS) Fishery Management Plan (FMP) to report any interactions that may occur between a CPS vessel and/or fishing gear and sea otters. In accordance with the regulations implementing the Endangered Species Act (ESA), NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) initiated an ESA section 7 consultation with the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) regarding the effects of implementing the final rule (72 FR 29891), which codified Amendment 11 to the CPS FMP. USFWS determined that formal consultation was necessary on the possible effects to the threatened southern sea otter. USFWS completed a biological opinion (BO) for this action and although it was concluded that fishing activities were not likely to jeopardize the continued existence of the southern sea otter, that there remained the potential to incidentally take southern sea otters. USFWS determined that certain measures should be put in place to ensure the continued protection of the species, including certain reporting requirements.

Specifically, these reporting requirements are:

1. If a southern sea otter is entangled in a net, regardless of whether the animal is injured or killed, such an occurrence must be reported within 24 hours to the Regional Administrator,

NMFS West Coast Region.

2. While fishing for CPS, vessel operators must record all observations of otter interactions (defined as otters within encircled nets or coming into contact with nets or vessels, including but not limited to entanglement) with their purse seine net(s) or vessel(s). With the exception of an entanglement, which will be initially reported as described in #1 above, all other observations must be reported within 20 days to the Regional Administrator.

When contacting NMFS after an interaction, fishermen are required to provide information regarding the location, specifically latitude and longitude, of the interaction and a description of the interaction itself. Descriptive information of the interaction should include: whether or not the otters were seen inside or outside the net; if inside the net, had the net been completely encircled; did contact occur with net or vessel; the number of otters present; duration of interaction; otter's behavior during interaction; and, measures taken to avoid interaction.

II. Method of Collection

The information will be collected on forms submitted by mail, phone, facsimile or e-mail.

III. Data

OMB Control Number: 0648-0566

Form Number(s): None

Type of Review: Regular submission (Extension of a currently approved collection).

Affected Public: Business or other for-profit organizations.

Estimated Number of Respondents: 2.

Estimated Time Per Response: 15 minutes.

Estimated Total Annual Burden Hours: 1.

Estimated Total Annual Cost to Public: \$10.00 in reporting costs.

IV. Request for Comments

Comments are invited on: (a) whether the proposed collection of information is necessary for the proper performance of the functions of the agency, including whether the information shall have practical utility; (b) the accuracy of the agency's estimate of the burden (including hours and cost) of the proposed collection of information; (c) ways to enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information to be collected; and (d) ways to minimize the burden of the collection of information on respondents, including through the use of automated collection techniques or other forms of information technology.

Comments submitted in response to this notice will be summarized and/or included in the request for OMB approval of this information collection; they also will become a matter of public record.

Sheleen Dumas,

Departmental Lead PRA Officer, Office of the Chief Information Officer, Commerce Department.

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